

Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture
Public Meeting
Minutes of December 3, 2018

A public meeting was held on Monday, December 3, 2018 at the All Saints Episcopal Church, 100 Lower Marlboro Road, Sunderland, Maryland 20689.

The meeting was called to order at 11:09 a.m. by Chair Dale Glenwood Green. The following commissioners were in attendance: Iris Leigh Barnes, Maya Davis, Janice Curtis Greene, Steven X. Lee, Lopez Matthews, Cheryl McLeod, Elinor L. Thompson, and Reggie Turner.

Proof of Public Notice

Accepted by general consensus.

Welcome

Rev. Ken Phelps, Rector at All Saints Episcopal Church, said it was the church's pleasure hosting the Maryland Commission on African American History & Culture (MCAAHC) meeting at their facility. He shared that this meeting was on sacred ground. Rev. Phelps said that the All Saints Episcopal Church institution was established in 1692. He said that there is a rich history in the institution of the Anglican Church where those who were enslaved helped to build religious places of worship. Rev. Phelps shared that over 10 years ago, the parish have been working with Michael Kent, former Commissioner of the MCAAHC, on a project where they are reclaiming and presenting the stories of African American history that is connected to their church in Calvert County.

Minutes of October 1, 2018 Meeting

Chair Dale Green called for a motion to accept the minutes of the October 1, 2018's MCAAHC meeting. Commissioner Maya Davis had a small amendment to her section of the minutes. She shared that in paragraph three that says: "Commissioner Davis had a meeting with the Baha'i faith community where they had a discourse on faith and race communities" should say "Commissioner Davis had a meeting with the Baha'i faith community where they had a discourse on race and faith communities." She also said that on the fourth paragraph the letter "W" needed to be added to W.E.B. DuBois' name. Last she asked with the last paragraph that the Mid Atlantic Regional Convention be changed to the Mid Atlantic Regional Archives Conference.

Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene had a minor change in the first paragraph of her report where the name the "First Order of Val Catholic Religious Women of Color in the United States" should read the "the First Order of Vowed Catholic Religious Women of Color in the United States."

Commissioner Lopez Matthews made a motion to accept the minutes with the amendments requested. Commissioner Maya Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Director's Report

LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant for the MCAAHC, gave the Director's Report on behalf of Director Chanel Compton who could not attend the meeting due to a family death. Mr. Herbert began the report by recognizing Mr. Winston Wilkinson, Chief of Staff for the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) and Mrs. Lyndra (neePratt) Marshall, Chair Lady Emeritus who both attended the MCAAHC meeting.

Mr. Herbert said that on October 27, 2018 the MCAAHC held a retreat at Morgan State University. The retreat was facilitated by Brent Leggs of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Research topics included the MCAAHC 50th Anniversary Campaign, BDM 35th Anniversary and the 10th Anniversary of the African American Heritage Preservation Grant.

In museum news, Mr. Herbert shared that from Director Compton's Director's Report that she said that at the Banneker-Douglass Museum, fall is an opportunity to welcome back student groups as well as prepare for holiday events and annual initiatives, such as our annual Kwanzaa celebration and Black history month celebrations. During

the fall season, BDM staff and commissioners collectively planned for the closing of the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Celebration and the MCAAHC 50th anniversary celebration.

Mr. Herbert took the time to give the museum's fall highlights for the month October and November. Beginning on November 14, 2018 Lewis Contractors, under the supervision of BDM/GOCI leadership and the Maryland Department of General Services, began capital repairs to the exterior of Verda Welcome Hall. All masonry work has been completed which included: rebuilding the Mt. Moriah Church chimney, patching the stucco on the walls in the alley, and repointing the coping stone on the roof of modern wing of facility.

Currently, contractors are adding a new gutter and repairing the existing slate roofing. Repairs that will be completed over the next two weeks include: finishing the gutters, slate roofing, installing lightening protection rods, and painting. These improvements will also end the leaking to the interior of Verda Welcome which has hindered exhibition programming.

In *Public Programs*, BDM has hosted several events such as *Curators, Collectors & Conversations*, a discussion with leading and emerging curators and collectors that included guest leaders such as: Leslie King Hammond (Curator & Art Historian), Maleke Glee (Director of the Prince George's African American Museum) and Aisha Pew (Curator and Founder of Dovecote Café in Baltimore City). In partnership with the Annapolis Chapter of the Links, Inc., BDM presented *Open Mic at the Museum*, hosted by Janice Hayes William. Maryland artist, Laurence Hurst, hosted the *Night at the Museum, Sip & Paint*, where participants enjoyed a festive evening at the museum, while creating their own masterpiece portraits of Frederick Douglass. BDM then celebrated Benjamin Banneker's birthday by hosting a discussion with Mr. C.R. Gibbs, acclaimed author and historian. During the lecture, Mr. Gibbs shared the fascinating history of Maryland's own, and Museum namesake Benjamin Banneker. He also dispelled some of the common misconceptions surrounding his legacy.

Mr. Herbert said that in Youth Programs, the BDM was awarded the "Lights on after School" mini grant from the National after School Alliance. From this, the BDM presented a *Harambe Read Aloud program* that featured readers from BDM staff, the Governor's Office of Children, Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, and Mayor Gavin Buckley of Annapolis, Maryland. BDM also announced its partnership with the Governor's Office of Children to implement the "Imagination Library: Young Readers" program; a free early childhood book give-away service to families living in Baltimore, Maryland.

Mr. Herbert said that the Douglass Reading Room Online Catalog is now available to the public. Schillicah Howard, BDM Curator of Collections, has developed the *Douglass Reading Room* online catalog. The catalog can be found on the exhibits page of the BDM website where all are welcome to review and gather great information.

In November, the Maryland Office of Tourism awarded the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture and the Anne Arundel Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Committee (chaired by Chair Dale Green) with the *Maryland Office of Tourism Award*. These organizations received this stellar award for program excellence for the promotion and program interpretation of the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial year.

Mr. Herbert shared that the BDM was awarded the *Wells Fargo Community Grant* to fund the *We Rise: Youth Project*, a year-long out of school time program, where students, from ages 10 to 14, will research and produce a special exhibition highlighting Maryland African American history and socially relevant topics.

Mr. Herbert finished the Director's Report by recognizing the BDM's General Docent Jutta Butler who was present at the meeting that has given the BDM 351.5 hours of volunteer service time as well as shared that the BDM is on the move where the museum has accumulated 8,831 visitors and is looking at breaking the tracked record of 9,007 visitors that is highest visitation in museum history.

Chair Dale Green took a moment to recognize Commissioner Steven X. Lee from Baltimore County and Commissioner Cheryl McLeod who just came to the MCAAHC meeting.

Report of the Officers

MCAAHC Chair Dale Green

Chair Dale Green began his report by sharing that Director Chanel Compton was not able to attend the MCAAHC meeting due to death in the family and he also shared that Vice Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England-Wilson was not able to join the MCAAHC public meeting due to travel where he was reporting for the officers as the chair of the commission.

Chair Green took a moment to recognize two individuals that were present at the meeting; they were: Commissioner Michael Kent, for MCAAHC commissioner from Calvert County and Commissioner Sharon Parker, Commissioner from Prince George's County. Chair Green also welcomed Mr. Winston Wilkinson, Chief of Staff, Governor's Office of Community Initiatives as well as recognized Commissioner Malcolm Funn, from Calvert County, who was the MCAAHC's host for this meeting that was excused due to out of state business travel.

Chair Green said that the MCAAHC is excited about standing in the eve of the 50th Anniversary of the MCAAHC in 2019. He said that there will be a year, long, anniversary with various programs and events taking place for the celebration. Chair Green referenced that there was an MCAAHC Retreat that took place at Morgan State University where there were many great detailed discussions as to what activities would be done for the great 50th Anniversary celebration.

Chair Green said to many, the history and the significance of the MCAAHC is unknown. Fifty years, next year, the MCAAHC is celebrating its existence due to the leadership of Senator Verda Freeman Welcome who founded the commission and authored legislation. She was also America's first African American State Senator. Chair Green said that she was Maryland's First Black State Senator and a trailblazer. Senator Verda Freeman Welcome was assisted by Dr. Benjamin Author Quarles who was a noted African American historian and noted professor emeritus of history at Morgan State University. Dr. Benjamin Quarles led the survey that commenced the MCAAHC. Chair Green said as the commission seeks to move forward as it recognizes the history of these two pioneers, who 50 years later has established 21 commissioners for the State of Maryland on the MCAAHC. He said that the MCAAHC commissioners are appointed by the governor with four year terms up to an eight year term.

Chair Green said that the commission oversees the BDM housed in the former Mt. Moriah AME Church as well as governs a \$1 million African American Heritage Preservation Grant program that helps to preserve African American History throughout the State of Maryland where it will mark its 10th anniversary in 2020. Chair Green said that the National Historical Trust said that there are only nine states that have such a commission. Maryland is the only state in the United States of America that has an African American commission with an infrastructure of a museum and \$1 million grant. Chair Green said that 2019 marks the 35th anniversary of the BDM where it will be a celebratory and an ambitious year!

Chair Green said that the MCAAHC had a successful African American grant appointed year where the MCAAHC has submitted its grant suggested recipients at the October 2018 Maryland Historical Trust's Board meeting. These grant recipients have been authorized by the secretary of the State of Maryland on behalf of the governor. Soon those recipients will be announced and a formal ceremony will be shared with the public stating what candidates will be receiving grants. He said that the MCAAHC will start making having African American Heritage Preservation Grant Workshops going from March 1st-July 15, 2019.

Chair Green shared that the MCAAHC is unique and is the first of its kind where it was established in 1969. It is one of nine commissions and the first to be established in America. The commission has 21 commissioners that are appointed by the governor where the commission oversees the State of Maryland Museum: Banneker-Douglass Museum which also has a director that serves a dual role of overseeing the MCAAHC and the BDM.

Chair Green said that he was honored to be chosen to participate in a prayer service for Ms. Angela Alsobrooks, the first African American Female County Executive. He shared that Ms. Alsobrooks is the first African American trailblazer as county executive behind Senator Verda Freeman Welcome where they both have made African American history in the State of Maryland.

Chair Green said that in February 2019 the MCAAHC will be working again with our re-elected State of Maryland officials under the Hogan-Rutherford administration. He said that the MCAAHC will be planning the state's official African American celebrations with Governor Larry Hogan and Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford. Chair Green said that there will be numerous African American events taking place statewide with a major culminating affair. He shared that the various events will be posted on commission's website and various social media platforms.

Report of Commissioners

Commissioner Iris Leigh Barnes, Ph.D.

Commissioner Iris Leigh Barnes, Ph.D. began her report by sharing that she is an MCAAHC Commissioner representing the Harford County area. Recently she attended the Lynching in Maryland Memorial Project which was held at the Reginald Lewis Museum in downtown Baltimore. The conference took place in October where it was very well attended. She said that it was a dynamic program with an overflow audience. Due to the great demand, the Lynching in Maryland Memorial Project will convene next year in Harford County, Maryland. A small group will be getting together in January to have a small introductory meeting. After this meeting, there will be a meeting with the public to see what their interest is in having a remembrance project in moving forward. Commissioner Barnes shared that there will be a lynching memorial project in Harford County and hopes that every county will recognize those that were lynched in the various counties throughout the State of Maryland where pillars and markers can be displayed like the Equal Justice Initiatives has done in Alabama.

Commissioner Barnes said that the group was contacted by the Concerned Citizens of Maryland concerning the impending removal of the historic Gwyn Oaks Park Carousel, which is on the mall in Washington, DC that is now looking to be removed. She shared that there are some impending deadlines where she and Chair Dale Green are looking to get some people together in seeing what could be done with quick deadline response in maintaining it. The carousel represents a segregated amusement park. Commissioner Barnes shared that it is important to educate the public on those formal segregated practices. She said that the historic Gwyn Oaks Park Carousel is one of the highly visited areas in Washington, DC.

Commissioner Reggie Turner

Commissioner Reggie Turner began his report by sharing that he represents Washington County in Western Maryland. He said that at the last MCAAHC meeting, Edie Wallace, President of Tolson's Chapel has invited the public to come to Sharpsburg, Maryland to join them for their Christmas by Candlelight affair on December 8, 2018.

Commissioner Turner said that he had further conversation with the Robert W. Johnson Community Center where they are in desperate needs of repairs to their swimming pool. The Robert W. Johnson Community Center and pool was in a segregated area within Washington County. The community center now serves as an aftercare program for many children. Ms. Jessica Johnson, President of the Robert W. Johnson Community Center has received several quotes where Commissioner Turner and others will be working with her in looking at getting the pool repaired.

Commissioner Turner shared that next year he would like to host one of the African American Heritage Preservation Grant workshops in Washington County. He also said that he has had further conversations with Ms. Carolyn Brooks who sits on the board of Hagerstown Community College where her family once owned Fort

Frederick. Commissioner Turner shared that her project was one of the projects she submitted information for in looking to receive a portion of the African American Heritage Preservation grant.

Commissioner Lopez Matthews

Commissioner Matthews shared that since the last MCAAHC public meeting he has attended the Association for the Study of African American Life and History's convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. He said that it was a very interesting place where presented at three sessions, sold out of all of his books he wrote, as well as participated in the Carter G. Woodson home meeting. Commissioner Matthews said that the home is now open three times a week where a traveling exhibit is being developed.

Commissioner Matthews said that he is representing the MCAAHC by being on the Reginald Lewis Museum's Board of Directors (RLM). He said that the museum is doing very well where the visitor ship is up 600%. He said that the RLM was spotlighted in the Baltimore Sun and has organizations like Kaiser Permanente sponsoring health care and African American programs there. Commissioner Matthews said that he is working with the 50th MCAAHC Anniversary Committee devising a symposium at Coppin State University in April. He also said that he is writing a book on the chapter of the Delta Lambda Alpha Phi Alpha which turns 100 in 2019. This book will focus on the significant individuals who have made major contributions across the world and the State of Maryland. Chair Dale Green said that the MCAAHC has hosted commissioner book signings in the past where he said that it would be appropriate to do this for the 50th anniversary of the MCAAHC.

Commissioner Maya Davis

Commissioner Maya Davis began her report sharing that she is an MCAAHC Commissioner that represents Prince George's County. She said that she presented at the Mid Atlantic Regional Archives Convention in Wilmington, Delaware on a partnership that they have with the University of Maryland Digital Curation Institution. In that presentation she was able to focus on Phoebe Jacobsen who was one of the founding members of the MCAAHC. Commissioner Davis said that it was great reporting on Phoebe Jacobsen because her work helps to build the Legacy of Slavery program at the Maryland State Archives.

Commissioner Davis said that she was able to attend a talk at Towson University where former MCAAHC Commissioner Dr. Cheryl LaRoche did a talk on the Hampden research on a plantation out in the Baltimore area. Commissioner Davis said that Dr. LaRoche was able to uncover a lot of information that the MSA did not have although the plantation have been under the park service where they had been interpreting slavery. She shared that this will be a great addition to their tours and visitor ship.

Commissioner Davis shared that she was invited in November 2018 to make a presentation at Edinburgh University in Scotland at the Black Knights and Authorship Conference. She shared that the title of her panel was "The Strike for Freedom." Her presentation focused on Frederick Douglass and the transatlantic world. Commissioner Davis said that there is a traveling exhibit called "Transatlantic World" that will be brought to the State of Maryland in February 2019. The exhibit will be housed at the Maryland House of Delegates.

Chair Green said that the publication from Edinburgh University was impressive but he shared with the public that the tour that was developed by the State of Maryland for Frederick Douglass is ranked as the third best tour by the United Nations.

Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene

Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene shared that she is a commissioner from Baltimore County and that it was great for her to be at All Saints Church for the church she attends is the All Saints Catholic Church in Baltimore, Maryland. She took a moment to thank Director Compton and the BDM staff for all of the information they provided for her on Dr. Benjamin Quarles and Senator Verda Freeman Welcome for her presentation. Commissioner Greene said that her oral history project for the Oblate Sisters of Providence is scheduled for

completion in 2019. She shared that the month November is Catholic African American History month where a video will be produced and premiered at a symposium about African American Catholic life. Commissioner Greene said that she will be a presenter at this symposium.

On Friday, November 16th she was invited by Mr. Chad Buttlebaum, from the folklores of the Maryland State Arts Council to represent the National Association of Blacks Story Tellers, Griot Circle of Storytellers and the MCAAHC at an exchange cultural event with the Chinese delegation from the Hunan Province. Commissioner Greene attended the meeting to share how to preserve, maintain and share African American history and culture. She said it was a great exchange and she hopes to get an invitation to visit China. Commissioner Greene said that she will be giving a presentation, with the Griot Circle of Storytellers, at the Hampden historical site on how the enslaved celebrated Christmas. On Saturday, February 23, 2019 Commissioner Greene will be giving a "Women of Color" performance on Women's suffrage at the Harriet Elizabeth Brown Community Center. In finishing her report, Commissioner Green said that on Friday, November 2, 2018 at the 36 National Festival and Conference, she was installed as the 16th President of the National Association of Black Story Tellers.

Commissioner Cheryl McLeod

Commissioner Cheryl McLeod gave a report sharing that she attended the Black Film Festival at the National Museum of African American History & Culture where they had a reception the night before. She shared that the musical icon Quincy Jones was there for this affair. Commissioner McLeod said that one his daughters put together a documentary on the "Life of Quincy Jones" that was shared at this museum. Commissioner McLeod brought up the film festival to see if the State of Maryland could possibly produce something like this. She thought this could possibly draw a lot of young people to come out, join, and support more African American history initiatives. She shared that she has been working with Mr. Lou Fields on the possibilities of producing an event like this.

Commissioner McLeod said that she was happy to see that Howard County has a new African American County Executive Mr. Calvin Ball. Commissioner McLeod shared that she is working with the new county executive and various entities in preserving and sharing the rich African American history like the Rosendale and Harriet Tubman schools that are in Howard County.

Commissioner McLeod said that on December 8, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. at the Banneker-Douglass Museum she will be introducing the seven principles of Kwanzaa that can be practiced all year long. She invited all to come and join this program.

Commissioner Elinor Thompson

Commissioner Elinor Thompson began her report sharing that she represents Anne Arundel and Southern Anne Arundel County. She said that she signed up for the Lynching Memorial project but could not make this program. Commissioner Thompson shares that she continually documents the history of the Brewer Hill Cemetery that his in Annapolis, Maryland. She said that there are five people who are interred there at the cemetery that have been lynched. Recently she found a naval midshipman that had been lynched and placed at this cemetery.

Commissioner Thompson shared that since her husband's death she has been trying to get somethings together where she is working on documenting the history of an historical African American church in Southern Anne Arundel County where they have a lot of history pertaining to the Civil War. The church is looking to produce a book about this rich history next year.

Commissioner Thompson said that she is working with the City of Annapolis in documenting the history of a lodge that is connected to Mt. Moriah AME church and the Banneker-Douglass Museum where meetings were held at this lodge for quite some time. She ended her report where she said that she looks forward to working

with the Banneker-Douglass Museum where the masonic lodge will reach out the Banneker-Douglass Museum with.

Commissioner Steve X. Lee

Commissioner Steven X. Lee began his report by sharing that he thanked the MCAAHC Commissioner's for allowing him to be a part of the MCAAHC Retreat via teleconferencing. He thanked the MCAAHC Commission for working with him due to some health challenges he faced.

Commissioner Lee said that he looks forward to meeting with Director Compton and the BDM staff in producing a stellar program on the Benjamin Banneker mural he help secure for the museum. In addition to this, he said that he is working with the Legislative Black Caucus in having the bill established in recognizing the contributions of the African American Soldiers that were in the Revolutionary War. Commissioner Lee recognized Mr. Errol Brown, African American historian, who recently passed.

Commissioner Lee shared that he looks forward to presenting their first roster from the Nomination's Committee at the next MCAAHC meeting.

Chair Dale Green took a moment and thanked Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene for the cake she provided for the holiday season for the MCAAHC commissioners and all to enjoy!

Presentations

Mr. Harry Wedewer, Friends of the Old Walville School

Mr. Harry Wedewer, President of the Friends of the Old Walville School thanked Chair Green and the MCAAHC for having the opportunity to make a small presentation on the Walville School. He said that it is the last standing one room Rosenwald School in Calvert County that was used to educate African Americans during the time of segregation. The school is located on Calvert Elementary School located in Prince Frederick, twenty minutes from the All Saint's Church. Mr. Wedewer took the time first to introduce the public and the MCAAHC to history of the school, secondly look at finding further capital funding projects that could assist the school with its needs in maintaining the school, and third looking at planting a seed of further funding two projects preserving the school.

Chair Green admonished Mr. Wedewer and the Friends of the Old Walville School to apply for the African American Heritage Preservation Grant as well as partner with the Maryland Historical Trust and the Maryland Office of Tourism to connect with the state of Maryland's strategy of how this site could be marketed and funded.

Ms. Karyn Molines, Division Chief for Calvert County Natural Resources

Ms. Karyn Molines, Division Chief for the Calvert County Natural Resources which is part of the new Parks and Recreation Division for Calvert County came to the MCAAHC meeting to share information concerning her division that received funding from the African American Heritage Program. She said that the division received funding that the Calvert Nature Society from the AAHPG for the George Rice House. Ms. Molines says that there are over 1,500 acres of land that is under her division where education projects take place on. In finishing her report she said that the Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm has been added to her charge of preserving and maintain the history in the Calvert County area.

Chair Green thanked Ms. Molines for her leadership and all of the work she has done. He said that Calvert County has one of the highest marks of projects that have applied for the AAHPG. Chair Green noticed that the MCAAHC was not placed on the presentation slides as one of the supporters for this project and asked that the commission's name be included since it's a major contributor to these projects thru the AAHPG.

Mr. Will Schwarz, founder of the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project

Mr. Will Schwarz, a Baltimore-based filmmaker and founder of the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project came to the MCAAHC meeting to give an update on this project. From the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project meeting and reception many found this conference to be a great success. Mr. Schwarz said that there were individuals that came from various counties that had the same questions and concerns on how one can preserve and share the history that has happened in their county in the State of Maryland. Mr. Schwarz talked about this ongoing project by having researching being done in collect soil from the grounds where Maryland lynchings took place and to get Maryland counties to memorialize the atrocities and recognize the victims.

Mr. Schwarz said that there was a great delegation that has been working on recognizing this history with historical markers in Harford County and Anne Arundel County. Mr. Schwarz said that the project is continually picking up momentum. He said that can find information on the website by going to mdlynching.org. Mr. Schwarz hopes that this will become a repository to discuss and preserve this history that affects our lives today. Last but not least he would like to see educational projects to be shared at high schools and universities abroad.

Chair Dale Green, called for a motion to adjourn the MCAAHC meeting. Commissioner Lopez Matthews made a motion that the MCAAHC be adjourned. Commissioner Reggie Turner seconded and the motion carried. The public meeting was adjourned at 1:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant